

Co-Op: Cook County

Community Improvement Strategy: Workforce Development and Youth Development

Cook County seeks to improve educational attainment for all its citizens, particular the skills of its workforce, in order to strengthen their ability to attract industry to the county. The County also desires to provide more positive youth programming within the county in order to enhance the development of the county's future leaders.

Issues to be Addressed

With an average unemployment rate at 12.8% and approximately 20.1% of the citizens of Cook County living below the poverty level, Cook County sees the need to better educate its citizens to improve their quality of life. A better-educated workforce could entice industry to locate in Cook County, enhancing overall economic development. It is the community's desire to provide constructive youth development experiences by expanding the Boys and Girls Club to include a teen club, as well as offering positive activities and programs in which the youth can be involved, in order to effect positive change in the future leaders of Cook County.

Measurements of Success:

The community will measure its success at the end of two years, by:

1. increase number of students in dual enrollment program by 15%
2. the community will have held 2 Job fairs
3. long term lease on old high school will be secured
4. an increase in the number of individuals who have taken the Work Ready Assessment from 350 to 450

Issue Addressed	Action Item	Responsible Local Partners	Responsible State Partners	Cost Estimate	Possible Funding Sources	Starting and ending dates for completion of action item
Workforce Development	Develop a job-shadowing program/internship program for high school students	Holly Green, Chamber of Commerce, Cook County Board of Education	n/a	n/a	n/a	April 2010
Workforce Development	Expand the dual enrollment program between Cook County High School and Valdosta Tech/ Valdosta State University/ABAC	Holly Green, Cook County Board of Education	Georgia Dept of Education, Valdosta Tech/ Valdosta State University/ABAC	n/a	n/a	August-September 2010

Workforce Development	Organize job fairs with local industries	Holly Green, Local businesses and industry, local governments, Chamber of Commerce, Family Connection	Dept of Labor, Dept of Family and Children Services	To be determined	Chamber of Commerce	November 2010 November 2011
Workforce Development	Create community awareness campaign to market the Work Ready Program and recruit more individuals to take assessments	Holly Green, Chamber of Commerce, local governments, local media outlets	Governor's Office of Workforce Development, Dept of Labor	n/a	n/a	June 2010
Youth Development	Acquire long-term lease on old high school to house a teen club as an extension of the Boys and Girls Club	Ramon Clark, Local governments, Cook County Board of Education, Cook County Boys and Girls Club	n/a	To be determined	Local government	January 2010
Youth Development	Submit grant applications to fund the development of the teen club building	Ramon Clark, Local governments, Cook County Board of Education, Cook County Boys and Girls Club	DCA, Dept of Human Services	\$500,000	CDBG, local and state foundations	April 2010
Youth Development	Encourage parental responsibility by expanding the existing Family Plus Program at Boys and Girls Club.	Ramon Clark, Dept of Family and Children's Services, Family Connection, Cook County Board of Education, Boys	DCA, Dept of Human Services	\$2,500	Co-op funds Family Connection Boys and Girls Club Chamber of Commerce	Fall 2010

		and Girls Club				
Youth Development	Expand “Passport to Manhood” program at the Boys and Girls Club	Ramon Clark, Cook County Boys and Girls Club	Family Connection Partnership	\$1500	Co-Op Funds	January 2010
Youth Development	Establish and Conduct Youth Summits	Ramon Clark, Cook County Boys and Girls Club, Cook County Board of Education, local churches, Cook County Family Connection	Family Connection Partnership	\$1,000	Local Governments Chamber Boys and Girls Club Family Connection	Summer 2010 Summer 2011